

that the will to compete in the athletic arena is nearly universal, crossing boundaries of culture and geography to bring together most of the world's nations. It is one of the great celebrations of the human spirit and one of the finest examples of our time of peaceful multi-national competition.

I am very proud of Charles' accomplishments and the role that he will play in this international competition. I wish Charles, and all the other athletes who are participating in the Olympics this year, the challenge of vigorous competition. May they again know the exaltation of pushing themselves to their limits and the roar of a crowd that lives vicariously through their triumph.●

101ST ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

● Mr. GRAMS. Mr. President, I rise today to pay tribute to the Veterans of Foreign Wars on the 101st anniversary of its founding, which is to be celebrated this Friday, September 29. For over a century, the men and women of the VFW and the VFW Ladies Auxiliary have worked tirelessly to ensure that veterans are treated with the respect they deserve.

The Veterans of Foreign Wars can trace its origins to 1899, with the founding of several local organizations composed of veterans of the Spanish-American War and the Philippine Insurrection. Members of these organizations were interested in securing medical care and pensions related to their military service. Over the next few years, these groups took part in a series of mergers, until by 1913 a single group calling itself "the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States" was formed. The VFW was chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1936.

According to the VFW, which is headquartered in Kansas City, Missouri, eligibility requirements for membership include "military service on foreign soil or in hostile waters in a campaign for which the U.S. government has authorized a medal." This has been a particularly war-torn century, and America has provided leadership in many of our century's conflicts, so a great many Americans meet these requirements. And a great many Americans have taken advantage of the benefits of membership: at this time, almost 2 million men and women belong to the VFW, including over 72,000 in my home state of Minnesota. The VFW pursues a number of goals through its many programs and services, which are aimed at strengthening comradeship among its members, perpetuating the memory and history of our fallen soldiers, fostering patriotism, defending the Constitution, and promoting service to our communities and our country.

The VFW also works to advance legislation benefiting veterans, their dependents and survivors. One of its main

legislative goals, and one that's very near and dear to my own heart, is ensuring that Congress maintains an adequate budget for veterans' health care. The VFW also fights to make a full range of employment and educational opportunities available to veterans after they exit the service. And through its goals of an open national cemetery in every state, the VFW is honoring our nation's heroes in death no less than in life. Through these and other activities, the VFW is working hard to make sure that our nation lives up to its sacred commitment to those who have given freedom to America and the world by giving so much of themselves.

As a nation, we are duty-bound to pass on the experiences of America's veterans, and their brothers and sisters who didn't come home, to future generations. Through the sacrifices of our servicemen and women, freedom and prosperity flourish. The Veterans of Foreign Wars does the vitally important work of making sure that these sacrifices will never be forgotten.●

NATIONAL KIDS VOTING WEEK

● Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, I would like to recognize Kids Voting USA and its efforts to educate our children about civic democracy and the importance of being an informed voter.

The program began in 1988 with three Arizona businessmen on a fishing trip to Costa Rica. They learned that voter turnout in that country was routinely about 80 percent. This high turnout was attributed to a tradition of children accompanying their parents to the polls. The men observed first-hand the success Costa Rica had achieved by instilling in children at an early age the importance of active participation and voting.

The three Arizona businessmen took this idea back to the United States and founded Kids Voting USA. Today, this nonprofit, nonpartisan organization reaches 5 million students in 39 states, and includes 200,000 teachers, and 20,000 voter precincts.

With voter turnout declining each year, Kids Voting USA recognizes the need to educate our youth and instill in them the responsibility to be active, informed citizens and voters. Kids Voting USA enables students to visit official polls on election day, accompanied by a parent or guardian, to cast a ballot that replicates the official ballot. Although not part of the official results, the students' votes are registered at schools and by the media.

This year, National Kids Voting Week is September 25-29. It is a week when Kids Voting communities across the country celebrate this vibrant and important program. I would like to recognize Kids Voting USA and all it has done to promote the future of democracy by engaging families, schools and communities in the election process.●

RETIREMENT OF DR. ERNEST URBAN

● Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize Dr. Ernest Urban as he retires from the largest healthcare system in the world, the Veterans Health Administration/Department of Veterans Affairs. For 26 years, Dr. Urban's compassionate, caring medical service has made an impact on our nation's heroes, our veterans.

Dr. Urban has served the Veterans Affairs Pittsburgh Healthcare System comprised of University Drive, Aspinwall and Highland Drive Divisions for 15 years as Chief of Staff. He has also been a professor and Assistant Dean for Veterans Affairs at the University of Pittsburgh's School of Medicine since 1985. Prior to 1985, he served in several other capacities in hospitals and universities all over the country. Dr. Urban has also authored publications dealing with many aspects of medicine that have proven to benefit the quality of care for our veterans. Most importantly, he continues to lecture and teach on a wide range of topics that benefit the VA Health Administration Personnel and provides medical leadership to carry into the 21st century.

I have been privileged to personally witness the hard work and dedication of doctors like Dr. Urban within the Veterans Administration Healthcare System. From 1946 until 1985, my mother served as a VA nurse at several hospitals including Aspinwall Veterans Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and Butler Veterans Hospital in Butler, Pennsylvania. As Chief of Nursing for 32 years, my mother can attest to the commitment which is typical of VA doctors and nurses everywhere. During times of low funding and limited staffing, VA doctors and staff worked harder than ever to care for the needs of their patients. While my experience on the Senate Armed Services Committee has served as affirmation of the dedication of Veterans Healthcare Administration, it pales in comparison to the hard work and sacrifice that I personally witnessed as the son of someone who served in the Veterans Healthcare Administration.

It is at this time that I would like to recognize Dr. Urban for his tremendous dedication to the medical profession. As he prepares for retirement, we can only celebrate the faithful service he provided to the needs of all veterans.●

THE HONORABLE PETER J. MACERONI RECEIVES 2000 ALEXANDER MACOMB CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD

● Mr. ABRAHAM. Mr. President, each year, the Southeast Michigan Chapter of the March of Dimes recognizes a select group of individuals whose contributions to the Macomb County, Michigan, community have been invaluable. I rise today to recognize the